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"Dance and Spirituality" Reviewed from the Journal of Dance Education

by Toni' Intravaia

The Sacred Dance Guild Journal carries articles by members and notes what dancers are doing locally, by chapters and by Festivals. And it has been doing this for 50 years. So, I thought I would add a review of articles from a different journal which finally featured articles on dance and spirituality.

In reading the Journal of Dance Education, I was drawn to this special issue "Dance and Spirituality".

Dr. Karen Clemente (SDG member) opens the series with "Dance as Sacred Expression." In this article:

"Since the beginning of humankind, dance has been inseparable from spiritual practice. Through time and place, while the cultural specificity of such practice was diverse primarily due to differing cosmologies, dance was nonetheless integral to spiritual expression.....

"As such cultures evolved, their dance forms became the vehicle for religious expression....Tracing the history of dance in the diverse religions of the world, from ancient to contemporary times, confirms that the human body has always held a key role in spiritual practice...

"In the United States, however, the mere mention of dance and religion in the same sentence can incite a full range of emotions from uneasiness to resentment to anger.....The danced expression of one's religiosity often has been misunderstood by both the culture at-large, which prefers to separate spirituality from the daily workings of society, and from within the traditions themselves, such as in the case of Christian denominations that have equated dancing with sinfulness..."

From the article by Liz Lerman "The Spiritual Connection (Ruminations and Curiosities from a Dance Artist)":

"....When I began to work in religious settings about 15 years ago, I noticed that creation was a big part of how people pictured God. For some who struggled with God concepts, creation offered a positive way to think about godliness. Reluctantly I recognized that ideas abut making things were a useful part of the conversation about creation in faith communities. I also saw that this put me back in a crazy loop toward understanding the power of creativity as a force in an artistic life....."

"Experiencing the Sacred in Dance Education" (Wonder, Compassion, Wisdom, and Wholeness in the Classroom) by Pat Debenham, M.A., C.L.M.A. and Kathie Debenham, M.S., C.L.M.A. is another article in the magazine that is relevant to Sacred Dance. "This article contributes to a growing educational dialogue about 'things of the spirit.' It focuses on four manifestations of human spirituality—wonder, compassion, wisdom, and wholeness. These qualities, when acknowledged and validated within dance learning environments, can sustain students and teachers alike in a world that increasingly values objective assessable reality over the inner reflective experience."

"Praise Dance in Community" by Julie Kerr-Berry, Ed.D. is an interview with Reverend Dr. Albirda Rose-Eberhardt.

Continued on page 10

JOURNEY TO PERU

November 9, 2008

Dear Grand Dancers,

It's been an historic week in the United States. It also has the potential of being an historic year for SDG. We are sponsoring our first international dance trip, and hopefully we will be holding some dance concerts which will benefit those beyond our borders, who are not quite as privileged as we are. As we move forward into our next fifty years and more we need to decide who we are, and where we want to go, and how we can dance with the world beyond and those who are right beside us in better ways.

Karen Josephson

P.S. Please see page 9 for more information. Then go to www.sacreddanceguild.org for cost and registration info.

President's Letter

This summer after the gala SDG Golden Celebration in New London, many of us journeyed to Jacob's Pillow in Massachusetts. This is a mecca for dancers, and where the first SDG festivals (then called Institutes) were held, led by the renowned Ted Shawn. One of the delights of our pilgrimage was to listen to Norton Owen, Director of Preservation, read from Ted Shawn's writings which are found in the Pillow's archives. The following is from Shawn's "Credo."

· I believe that dance is the oldest, noblest, and most cogent of the arts.

· I believe that dance has the power to heal, mentally and physically.

· I believe that dance is the universal language, and as such has power to promote One World. Dance can replace misunderstandings due to verbalization which distorts communications between the nations and races of mankind.

· I believe that DANCE is a way of life, which will lead humanity into continually higher and greater dimensions of existence. Ted Shawn

All sat bathed in words we could wholeheartedly agree with, and which are at the core of the Guild. In our first fifty years we have embraced dance as a healing agent, and a binding force. We have demonstrated this to our congregations and communities, and helped many liberate their dancing spirits to take shape in dancing bodies. There are still struggles in particular congregations and situations, but for the most past we have come a long way from what was only a dream for our founders.

And what of our next fifty years? What are our dreams? My dream is that we start connecting in stronger ways with dance beyond our North American borders to make SDG truly an international organization. To that end, there will be a SDG sponsored dance trip to Peru June 28-July 6. There is also talk generating within the Executive Board about holding some concerts, the proceeds of which will go toward assisting dance schools in poverty stricken parts of the world. Even though SDG is not a wealthy organization, and could certainly use the concert-generated income, there are others who have much less, and could use the hope and healing which would come with the gift.

Perhaps there are those in our communities who could use the gift from such concerts. After Hurricane Katrina the Louisiana SDG people reached out to the victims with healing dance opportunities. In the mid eighties the "United Support of Artists for Africa" penned and sang, "We are the world, we are the children. We are the ones who make a brighter day so let's start giving." April 29 is International Dance Day. I would like to encourage all of you to make the entire month of April International Dance Month. Let's hold concerts for the benefit of dancers in need, wherever they may be. Let's reach beyond ourselves toward Ted Shawn's desire to see One World dancing. Let's use dance to lead humanity into continually higher and greater dimensions of existence.

Karen Josephson

Ottawa Chapter Workshop (see page 11).

SACRED dance GUILD

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ISSN 1043-5328. Sacred Dance Guild Web Site: www.sacreddanceguild.org. Corporate subscriptions to the JOURNAL are available for $35. Membership to the Sacred Dance Guild is also available for the following rates: One-Year Membership (Domestic AND International, US Dollars) $50.00; Two-Year Membership (Domestic AND International, US Dollars) $80.00; One-Year Student Membership $25; One-Year Senior (65+) Membership $35.00; One-Year Group Membership $90.00 and Life Membership $1000.00. Members receive:

-Sacred Dance Guild Journal published three times a year
-Membership Directory with geographical and leadership listings printed annually
-Calendar of Events published in the Journal and online with regional, national, and international activities
-Membership in Chapter or Region with local events and activities
-Reduced fees at the International Festival held annually in different locations within the United States
-Reduced fees at Guild workshops and those of reciprocal organizations
-Reduced cost for all Guild publications
-Opportunity to be listed as a resource in the Online Resource Database
-Opportunity to create your own website to be linked to the SDG website
-Ability to sign up for email reminders for events listed on SDG Event Calendars
-Opportunity to be part of the SDG Member News elist where sacred dance issues, concerns, and ideas are shared among members from all over the world

Subscription and membership orders should go to Sacred Dance Guild, 550 M Ritchie Highway #271, Severna Park, MD 21146.

Deadlines for JOURNAL: August 15, November 15 and March 15. Deadlines for the Events Calendar are the same as for the Journal. Articles of 500 words or less, dance activity, Chapter/Region/membership news, letters and black and white/color photographs should be sent by deadline dates to: Sacred Dance Guild Journal: journal@sacreddanceguild.org or Toni' Intravaia, Editor, 201 Hewitt, Carbondale, IL 62901.

EDITORIAL

Looking over all the material sent in, whether it be website or snail mail, I am overwhelmed by the amount this time. As far as the theme "Four Season of Sacred Dance" goes, everyone had their idea on this. That is why I chose it - there are so many ways to view it. And you Sacred Dancers chose so well.

Also there were so many reports of follow-ups that indicated that "Moving Mysteries" really inspired all those who attended the 50th. And, how many of you will be traveling to Peru? How many will be part of a "Traveling Workshop"? (I just read Mary Kamp's notes on this new idea.) These both are exciting ideas. And the one for Peru is reality!!

Perhaps, like Erma Bombeck we should reflect "When I stand before God at the end of my life I would hope that I would have not a single bit of talent left and could say 'I used everything you gave me.'"

Our Directory at Saint Francis Xavier parish really not only honored me but the Sacred Dance Guild by having a photo of my dance for the Psalm used at Confirmation.

Please continue to send your news, as well as dates for the Calendar of Events, to Toni' Intravaia, Editor, 201 Hewitt, Carbondale, Illinois 62901.

Letter to the Editor

From Joann Flanigan

Thanks, Kat, so very much for designing and making that very special T-shirt Memory Quilt for the Sacred Dance Guild. It was wonderful to study it and let it bring back beautiful memories of all those grand festivals in which I danced over the years. My first festival was 1985 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and over the years I missed only one festival (Chicago 1991 when my husband had emergency surgery).

I don't know who won the quilt, but I do hope she or he realizes what a treasure it represents to our Sacred Dance Guild history. Dancing Blessings.

T-shirt Memory Quilt made by Kat Pettycrew on display at Festival 2008

April 29 is International Dance Day. I would like to encourage all of you to make the entire month of April International Dance Month.

Karen Josephson, Sacred Dance Guild President

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Join the Sacred Dance Guild on journey to Peru!

Please see page 9.

Four Seasons of Sacred Dance

Life is a Dance

By Jeannine Bunyan

All Life is a Dance. When we are alert, we see God's Sacred Dance. It may appear as waves on the ocean, or birds soaring on the wind or flames flickering on the hearth. Everywhere we look we see God's Sacred Dance. Actually our human life begins in a Dance, a rhythmic joining of two people in love. Knowing that human Life is participating in God's Sacred Dance, we can observe its progress through four Seasons.

Childhood: All we need do is watch children in their spontaneous response to anything that pleases them. In their excitement, they feel absolutely free to giggle, bounce, or twirl. It seems they can do no other than literally jump for joy! One day while observing such exuberance of happy children, Spirit inspired me to call my movement ministry, Jump for Joy! This wonderful period of innocence is a very precious Season for children to know how dearly they are loved. They will gladly chant:

Clap your hands and jump for joy
Clap hands 3 times, do 3 happy hops
God loves every girl and boy.
Give yourself a big God hug.
(Repeat as often as meaningful)

Teenage: The second Season is the in-between years. We are no longer children, but not yet adults. We are still under care of our parents, while doing the Dance to Discover "Who do I want to be!" While this is an exciting period of experimenting, it can also be puzzling. In order to keep positive and moving forward during this period, it may be helpful to chant:

Take time each day to look upward
When morning is just begun
Looking down you'll see only shadows
Looking up you'll see the sun

Adulthood: This is a very challenging third Season, developing our career while establishing home and family. All this is going on as we Dance to Discern "Who am I?" As we are fulfilling our multiple roles, perhaps self esteem or remorse issues may arise. At such times we need to remember that God is always beside us, directing and protecting us. This hymn by Katharina von Sclegel set to FINLANDIA by Jean Sebelius may be helpful:

Be still my soul *Hands pat heart to calm*
The Lord is at thy side.
Right hand describe arch to right side
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain
Arms stretch to form cross, hang head
Leave to thy God to order and provide
Reach up then lower hands to receive
In every change, God constant will remain
Hands do random circular changing patterns

Be still my soul
Thy best thy heavenly Friend
Repeat movements as above
Through thorny ways
Hands do sharp jagged clawing patterns
Leads to a joyful end!
Crashing symbols, end in Thankful pose.

Senior: This is the fourth and last Season of our human Sacred Dance. As we review our earlier Seasons recalling challenges and triumphs, we have a better understanding of God's Sacred Dance. There is comfort in seeing God's Sacred Dance as *Guidance* = "God, You and I Dance!" Our heart is very full with an Attitude of Gratitude as we face our Future with Faith!

My Gratitude by Jeannine Bunyan
With gratitude I end this day
Folded hands spiral upward
For all God's blessings sent my way
Hands trace sign of infinity overhead.
Forgiveness granted, fear release
Gather blessings overhead
I lay me down with heart in peace
Hands across over heart, head bowed.

God's Love wherein I now repose
Remain bowed, recalling day's events
My gratitude at this day's close
Accept forgiveness and peaceful sleep.

Dear friends, we have come full Circle. God's Sacred Dance is a Circle Dance, without beginning, without ending.. Perhaps our first childhood prayer is still appropriate:

Now I lay me down to sleep
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake.
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

Moving Through the Mysteries of the Rosary

By Michele Marie Beaulieux

The rosary is a traditional Roman Catholic meditative prayer form that combines prayer intentions, scripture stories called "mysteries," and repetitive prayers. In honor of October as the Month of the Rosary, we explore how the full cycle of the mysteries of the rosary - Jesus' birth, ministry, death, and resurrection - is relevant to our contemporary life journeys. After grounding ourselves in movement-based Lectio Divina (scriptural reflection) and faith sharing, we developed our own moving meditations to the natural rhythms of the spoken rosary.

Our movement focused on any one of the three intertwined elements of rosary prayer - the prayer intention, the scripture meditation, or the repetitive prayers themselves - or it flowed between them. Our leader, Michele Marie Beaulieux, danced the rosary as a private movement meditation, and, as a retreat leader, she guides the other people, whether they consider themselves dancers or not, in experiencing how they can deepen their personal prayer by moving to the rhythms and stories of the rosary. The rosary is so rich, so full of layers that it provides a plush opportunity for exploring movement. People who participate in Michele's retreats find their personal rosary prayer deepened; they expand their movement beyond their fingers to their entire bodies.

2008 Festival Reprise – Moving Mysteries in Fredericksburg, Virginia

By Pamela White, Potomac Chapter

Dancing into 2008 from the 1930s, the spirits of Doris Humphrey and Erika Thimey, both vibrant and gliding, entered the Fredericksburg United Methodist Church (FUMC) on November 1st, thanks to the Sacred Dance Ensemble of Fredericksburg and the Potomac Chapter of the Sacred Dance Guild. Surely all the dancing spirits who attended the SDG 50th Anniversary Festival this past July joined them to enliven the Fredericksburg workshop, "Moving Mysteries: Reprise and Surprise", a 2008 Festival review for dancers from around the DC Metropolitan area who weren't able to make it to Festival this past summer.

Perhaps the Potomac Chapter is just lucky. Many of our members were presenters both at Festival and at the Reprise workshop. Stepping out early at 7:00 am for registration and light fare, Diana Burton started by 8 am with yoga, guiding mind, muscle, and bones into a peaceful meditation, waking us up to just being. It was an appropriate precursor for Kathryn Sparks' presentation - *Enlarging the Pallet: A Dance Sampler for the Multi-Sensory.* Here we introduced ourselves one at a time by sharing a key word for the moment and then learning a wonderful upper body prayer to engage a congregation in dance while remaining seated. Afterwards, we listened to a reading of Luke 1:46-55, the Magnificat, before Kathryn asked us to choreograph our own steps to two key words from the reading: lift and scatter. She has used this same technique in the past to choreograph a collaborative dance for a worship service. She showed a video of that success which was a perfect time for us to review key words.

Alas, we did not finish with a performance of the Magnificat but we did take Suzi Bevan's choreography of "Me & God" to perform later at the FUMC's evening Open Door Contemporary Service.

The spirit naturally sings praise after nourishment and so we were able to sing praise after lunch by participating in the afternoon workshop: Latifah Kropf's *Jewish Sacred Dances.* These were sacred circle dances requiring a certain concentration on movement in relationship to space and time, voice, and learning a new language: Hebrew. Such praise reinforced one of Kathryn's key words: lifting, and likely scattering too - light rays to all those who were unknowingly with us in spirit.

Enter the ever-youthful Sally Morovitz presenting *Doris Humphrey's Fall and Recovery.* Here was the very spirit of Doris inside Sally Moravitz. The side fall from the knee. The side fall from standing. The back fall from standing. The circle fall. And we learned how to recover from all of that. The next presentation was Harriet Campbell - *Honoring the Instrument* – keeping our dancing instrument – the body - tuned, in balance, and in health! She reminded us to conscientiously train the body to ensure safety. Her handout was *A Sacred Dancer's Guide to Physical Training Principles.*

Another burst of light-filled energy entered FUMC: *Erika Thimey's Candle Dance* as presented by her protegees and devotees, Sharon Werth and Josephine Nicholson. Together they introduced Erika's candle dance from 1933, a perfect addition to any worship service with its calm bows and graceful lifting. Indeed, Erika Thimey was one of the first choreographers to establish liturgical dance as a form of worship.

Recreating the spirit of Festival through a one-day or two-day workshop, even months after the fact, provides a fantastic opportunity for introducing Sacred Dance Guild to local dancers and for bringing membership alive! (We even had a lapsed member renew her membership to join us!) It is a fun and educational strategy to keep the spirit of dance abundant in your area – and there is no time limit for a reprise. Energy is always waiting to be conjured – especially if presenters are local and willing to revisit their work. Those who attended the Fredericksburg's "Moving Mysteries: Reprise & Surprise" certainly summoned the spirit of Festival, 2008. May others be so too inspired!

The Potomac Chapter celebrated at the workshop on the weekend of November 1, 2008.

The Ring Bearers (in Seven Short Beats)

By Pulelehua RuthMarie Quirk, Carolynn Hine-Johnson and Scott P. Johnson

I. We are all over The Ring: the ring of life and of love, the ring of giving and receiving, the ring of death and recovery from near-death, the ring of the heart at the center of our lives, the ring as symbol for eternal significance and temporal magnificence. Starfire's ring and all it symbolizes was bestowed on Scott and Carolynn as rings of meaning ring round the ringings of our lives.

II. Starfire changed my life at a women's prayer group meeting, says Pulelehua. She started dancing as we prayed and sang. Wow! I had always felt the desire to dance in worship but never had the courage to just do it.... I quickly joined her dance.

Our friendship grew from attending country western dances in Hawai'i (where we never talked about the divine) to soul sisters, discovering that we were both members of the Sacred Dance Guild and worked for the University of Hawaii: she on Maui, me on 'Oahu. (We also shared graduate degrees in education, Macintosh fanaticism, and sea-nymph-mania.)

Starfire and I shared our lives for 15 years, through love and heartbreak, through festivals and much dancing. I received the blessing of service in her last days: to rub her feet and kiss her head. None of us knows who will go first or what our lives will bring, but we all participate in the joyous ring dance of life.

III. "'God, come to my assistance; Lord, make haste to help me.' This is all way too close for comfort...." (So Scott began his testimony at the Bethel College Faculty Retreat in August 2008.) Carolynn is going to be my Greek chorus to help me out when I'm choked up and the words won't come.

"'Inhale Grace; Exhale Gratitude.' Breathe with me, please. And don't worry; this isn't an embodied slippery slope where you give in to my simple request to breathe and then I make you stand up and do a Sacred Dance. Just breathe.... 'Inhale Grace; Exhale Gratitude.'"

IV. "'Inhale Grace; Exhale Gratitude.' That was Starfire's favorite quote," Pulelehua remarks after Scott's name was drawn from the basket, making him the new owner of The Ring. Starfire's lovely diamond and platinum ring—a gift from a delightful man who brought her to Hawai'i—was gifted to the SDG as Starfire recognized that she was approaching the end of her life.

This year—2008, the 50th anniversary of the Sacred Dance Guild—The Ring became the perfect gift to a husband and wife who share much in common with Starfire. She was (as they are) consummate educators, articulate, creative, and inspiring, excelling in the communication process, while helping others to illuminate and realize their paths. Starfire (like Carolynn) was a dancer from the time she could walk and excelled at many of its expressive forms.

V. "The Lord gives; the Lord takes; blessed be the Lord. Why receive the good days from the Lord and not the bad ones?" Job gave meaning to Scott's diagnosis of non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma in 2006. When the second diagnosis of a more aggressive type of NHL came in November 2007, I was graced with this Word from John 21: Peter gets the grilling from Jesus: "Do you love me?" "Of course, you know everything, you've got to know I love you." "Feed my sheep. I'm telling you the truth: When you were young you dressed yourself and went wherever you wished, but when you get old you'll have to stretch out your hands while someone else dresses you and takes you where you don't want to go.... Follow me."

This was not the desired word of healing, but one of becoming submissive, being a true Christ-follower by participating in suffering. And it was the right word at the right time. The command— "Follow me" —implies that Jesus is leading.

VI. Starfire became a lifetime member of the Sacred Dance Guild in 1971. Through her work/play, she changed hundreds of people's lives, influencing thousands of others who felt the feathering love of God that her rituals inspired. For 30 years, she was an active festival presenter, organizer, and was the worship director at our 2001 Big Island festival. She was also the president of the Hawai'i chapter from 2000-2002.

While Carolynn is the new Secretary for the SDG, Scott continues in his duties as Chair of the Communication Department at Bethel College in Mishawaka, Indiana.

And The Ring? Why, it's adorning Carolynn's hand with much adoration from friends and family; more importantly, it's a poignant sign that Emmanuel—God-With-Us—remains Lord-of-the-Dance.

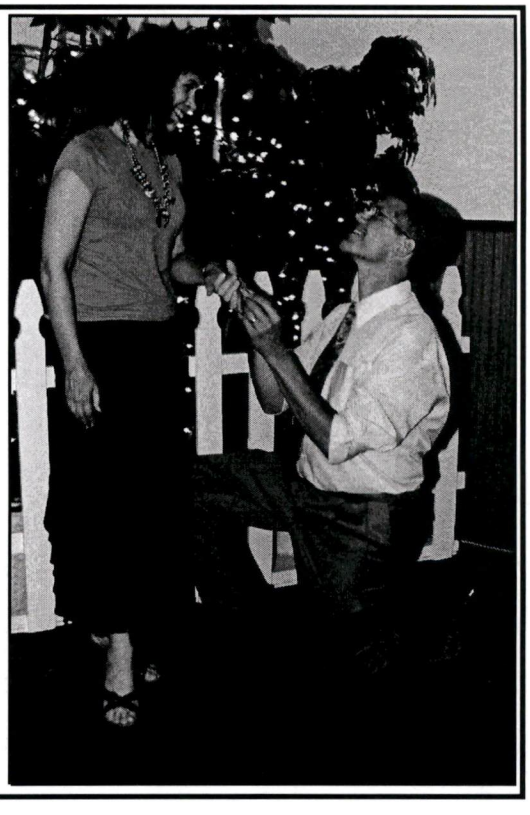
VII. We're grateful to the Creator for unexpected and undeserved blessings. This summer, Carolynn and I attended the Sacred Dance Guild Conference in Connecticut, where they held a drawing for a diamond ring—a brilliant white, half-carat diamond in a Tiffany setting—from Starfire. Just one of a handful of men in a room with hundreds of women, and they drew my name. I promptly gave it to Carolynn, who never got a diamond because I was too poor. (We celebrated our 22nd wedding anniversary on August 9th.)

We're grateful that during the stem cell transplant everything happened successfully, which resulted in a new birthday—April 10th. The birthstone for April is Diamond; Peter is my middle name; "Petrus" means Rock; the diamond is "the rock"; and the Lord is my Rock and my Salvation, of whom shall I be afraid?

We're grateful for the capacity to live and think with metaphor and movement: seeing life as co-participants in bearing the Ring, this Ring which heals, moves, stirs and unites, making divided things whole.

Finally, we know Whose we are and Whom we serve.

Inhale Grace; Exhale Gratitude.



Carolynn Hine-Johnson and Scott P. Johnson

Reflections of a Skyloom Dancer

By Elaine Herg Sisler

Picture this... a simple set with a large mirror center stage flanked by two chairs draped with yellow silk scarves. Dancers, Elaine and Shirley enter and stand with their backs to one another on opposites sides of the stage. Elaine is wearing a knee length blue dress and a fluffy pink boa. Shirley is in an elegant silk dressing gown worn over a long blue dress.

Imagine this... Elaine begins a spirited tap dance flouncing about the stage until she catches a glimpse of herself in the mirror. Slowly, she approaches the mirror. It is instantly clear that she does not like what she sees. Tapping her flabby chin upward she changes poses but still is not satisfied. Using both hands she stretches her face upwards to see what a facelift might look like. The audience chuckles and then sighs as she dejectedly walks away from the mirror, tosses the boa to the floor and stamps the floor in frustration.

Behold this... Shirley slowly limps towards the mirror, unwraps and drops her robe to floor. She flutters and dances about in a jazzy manner clearly thrilled with the image she sees. The audience roars with laughter at her pantomimed antics.

Slowly, both dancers make their way to the chairs. In perfect unison, mirror images of one another, they place the silk scarves upon their shoulders and sit in stillness. The music begins and Molly Scott sings, "Do You See Me?" The dancers use simple gesture, mirrored movement, unison dancing and solo improvisation to express the message of the song. Each dancer graces the stage in her own style with ego and alter ego communing in a sacred space and time.

The dance ends with Shirley and Elaine processing hand in hand toward the mirror. They reach one hand to their images in the mirror, turn to look each other in the eye and reach the other hand in a giving gesture to the audience knowing that they are indeed beautiful.

Elaine's note:

This dance was presented in concert on July 21, 2008 at Connecticut College in celebration of the Sacred Dance Guild's 50th Jubilee Year Festival. Shirley and I are both members of the Sacred Dance Guild and Skyloom Liturgical Dance group based in Lexington, Massachusetts. We were delighted when invited to perform in the festival concert. Our Skyloom group has performed several times at past festivals. Originally, we planned not to perform because only two members of our group were attending festival 08. Ultimately, Shirley and I decided to accept the invitation and the challenge to create a duet.

It is very special for me to work with Shirley because she is responsible for bringing me into the realm of sacred dance. Several festival participants said they felt that our dance was poignant because many of our SDG members are up in years. It is not always easy to see or understand how our inner beauty grows and shines as our physical beauty changes and fades. The dance helps me to dig deep and find the grace to recognize true beauty in others and myself. Thank you to Molly Scott for her beautiful song that inspired our dance that took the audience from laughter to tears. Thank you to Shirley Blancke for her friendship, artistry and sense of humor. And last but not least, thank you to Skyloom member, Sybille Volz, who passionately rehearsed us with her clear vision of what a successful dance should be.

Do You See Me?

By Molly Scott

Do you see me? Once I was what I still am
Sitting by the window in an ordinary chair
Sitting by the window with the sunlight in my hair
Knowing that I am beautiful...

You and sometimes mirrors show me something that I seem to be
Painted lips and wrinkled cheeks, a faded parchment fantasy
The gestures of this aging body mock the dances that I wish to dance
And if you seem to love me, it's so often seems by chance

Do you see me? Do you see behind the masks that I wear?
Can you hear me caring when I say that I don't care?
Underneath the wrinkles and the graying of my hair
Do you see me there?

Of all the things I'd ask of you the realest thing would seem to be
That you would see me with your heart and for the light that shines in me
I do not need your pity nor the memory of your backward glance
I only need to love you and go onward in the dance...

The Sacred Dance Guild Festival 2008

By Tricia Lee

"I went to learn,
and I learnt that Dance as Sacred Art
uplifts the heart, mind, body and soul,
into the realm of the Divine,
into 'Transcendance'."

When your heart, mind, body and soul feel hungry to dance then the prospect of a week's immersion in Sacred Dance seems like the offer of a feast, a veritable banquet of dance delights!!

No matter the distance to Connecticut, USA, no matter that I was the only Australian there, no matter that I am not a "trained dancer" and have no real 'formal dance' experience, no matter even that I was dipping prematurely into my Superann' to fund the trip ..... all that mattered was that I be there for the Opening Ceremony on the Sunday, through to the closing trip home from the performance of Alonzo King's 'Lines Ballet' at Jacob's Pillow, in New England on the following Saturday.

The Festival Welcome dance [from Emmalyn Moreno] which we shared on the first night, was danced outdoors each following morning under the huge tall pine trees of our gathering space at Connecticut College,

"People of the east, People of the west,
Come dance with the rising of the sun
People of the north, People of the south,
Moving Mysteries we are one.'

More than 250 people dancing and singing together created a vibrant but harmonious start to whatever delightful 'dance menu' you could wish to sample during the rest of the day's workshops, events, inspirations and performances.

Being a newcomer I decided on a "smorgasbord' approach, experiencing as many different 'dance dishes' as I could possibly accommodate within the diverse range of choices which were available each day.

At any one time during the day, the college had the space and facilities for up to seven options which spanned everything from "Dancing the Mystery all around us" using the high energy techniques of Wesley Yarbor, (an ex dancer with Alvin Ailey from New York) to the gentle Motion Sculpture and "Divine Meditation" of Claire Elizabeth Barrett, from the funky "Luigi, a Moving Mystery" with Francis Roach, a teacher from the Luigi Jazz Center in New York, to the Rumi inspired class "Come, come, come again come" with Carla de Sola, one of the "Living Legacies" of the Sacred Dance Guild. The evenings brought opportunities to share in tribal rhythms and dance, to walk the Lumiere Labyrinth and engage with a band of motion sculpture 'angels' all dressed in white, to watch other groups of dancers and performers and to share, share, share.

Overall there were around 40 presenters moving the week along from "Awakening the Dancer within the Mystery", through Honoring and Opening to Mystery and finally to Anticipating and "Manifesting the Mystery."

As with all good banquets, there was truly something for everyone and far more than enough to go round, till at around 10:30 each evening, the satiated dancers reluctantly retired in anticipation of the next day's start around 6:45 am.

Each day's dance invited the body to move more freely, to play more expansively, to experiment more creatively, to share more deeply, to let go, let go and let go again until the sheer joy of dancing could be almost touched in the air as if it shimmered above us all, a fantastic experience.

As an option over lunchtime I made sure I had a taste of the series of talks given by Reverend Angela Yarber, a dancer and doctoral student in Art and Religion at The Graduate Theological College.

Her wealth of historical knowledge and information on the use of Dance in Comparative Religions gave a contextual backdrop to the contemporary development of the vital work of The Sacred Dance Guild in helping to reestablish Dance as a form of Spiritual practice and an expression of the divine.

This was further embedded in my understanding by the "dessert", the last day's visit to Jacob's Pillow, the original 'home' (and now International Dance College and Festival site) of Ted Shawn and Ruth St Denis, who through their work as Denishawn, are recognised as pioneers in modern dance in America. Dancers such as Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey and Alicia Markova all spent time here.

Jacob's Pillow is recognised and maintained now as an "Irreplaceable Dance Treasure" and a National Historic landmark. It felt truly amazing to be able to watch classes rehearsing and performing there, the outdoor stage akin to the Quarry amphitheatre in Perth.

In his "Credo" we get a sense of the divine inspiration which drove Ted Shawn as he declared :

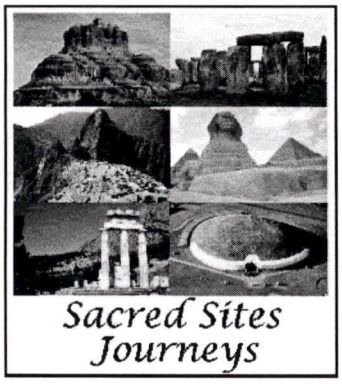
"I believe
that dance has the power to heal, mentally and physi-cally,
That dance is the most perfect symbol of the activity of God and his angels
That DANCE is a way of life which will lead humanity into continually higher and greater dimensions of existence."

On that parting note, I exchanged addresses and said my goodbyes to the most wonderful group of dancers I have ever met.

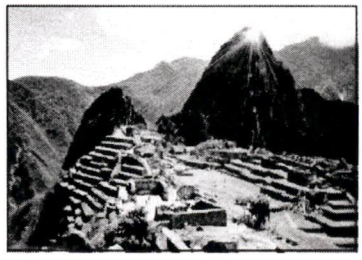
I gave my thank you's to The Board of The Guild for the scholarship which they awarded me to help with my fees, and took my leave of America, via Canada, to return home.

I feel so deeply nourished from this Dance Festival that I'd like to encourage every 'dancer' to explore this sense of the Sacred in their dance, to check out the website of The Sacred Dance Guild, to save up and join them for the 2009 "Dancing the Sacred Sites in Peru", or even the next Festival 2010.

It's an experience not to be missed!!!!



Sacred Dance Journey to PERU



June 28— July 6, 2009

Sponsored by The Sacred Dance Guild

Founded in 1958, The Sacred Dance Guild, an international, multicultural, interfaith, nonprofit organization, promotes Sacred Dance as prayer, and as a means of spiritual growth, connection to The Divine, and integration of mind, body, and spirit. www.sacreddanceguild.org

Tour Hostess and Featured Dancer: Dr. JoyBeth Lufty

Sacred Dance Guild President Elect

Tour Director and Featured Speaker: Andrea Mikana-Pinkham

Director of Sacred Sites Journeys & Andean Shamanic Practitioner

Tour Guide: Dr. Jose (Pepe) Altamirano

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- Excellent bilingual Tour Guide Dr. Jose (Pepe) Altamirano

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"Dance and Spirituality"
Reviewed from the Journal of Dance Education

Continued from page 1

"Praise Dance has long been an integral part of Christian worship, particularly in the African American church. In a recent interview, Dr. Albirda Rose-Eberhardt, dance educator, artist, and theologian, described her work in Praise Dance, which spans over 50 years of experience in performance, education, church, and community settings...."

The last article of interest to Sacred Dance Guild readers in this magazine is entitled "The Sacred or the Profane" by Karen Clemente, Ed.D.

"...The article addresses the utilization of modern dance compositional approaches in the development of sacred dance works. A brief history of sacred dance in the Western Church is traced as a foundation for students' stereotypical approaches to dance and religion. Also examined is the 20th Century modern dance choreographers' practice of incorporating biblical thematic material in their works. Aspects of form and content are considered throughout the article, as pedagogical processes for dance making are described."

As editor of the Sacred Dance Guild Journal, and as a long, long time member, I urge you to get a copy of this magazine and read the entire series. See Recommended Reading, page 14, for issue number and address.

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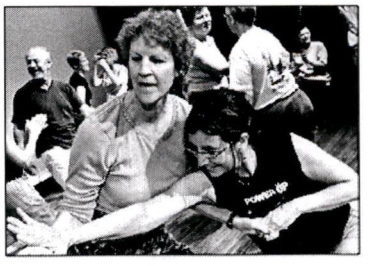

This Fall: **"Untensive" Retreats** and **"The Secrets of InterPlay"** in Washington, D.C., Iowa, East Texas, Michigan, California, India, Seattle, and Oakland. Check the website for full details.

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SDG CHAPTER AND REGION NEWS

New York Chapter:

The perfect way to get into the Christmas spirit was the experience of a sacred dance workshop with Father Bob VerEecke, S.J., and members of the Boston Liturgical Dance Ensemble, exploring historic Boston and enjoying "A Dancer's Christmas." The workshop took place on Friday, December 19 in the Dance Studio at Boston College's Brighton Campus. "A Dancer's Christmas" was held at the Robsham Theatre on the Boston College campus.

Lakeshore Chapter:

The Lakeshore Chapter presented its annual member video view and potluck on October 18. The group watched the film, "Mary Anthony: A Life in Modern Dance."

Potomac Chapter:

Kamsisi (New Roots) Rituals for Life's Journey with African Dance, Drums, Chanting and InterPlay Masankho Kamsisi Banda African Shaman/ InterPlay Leader was held November 14 at Seekers Church, Washington, DC.

When translated to English Masankho's full name means "choosing new roots for groups of people". Masankho held a day of celebrating the highs and healing the lows of life's journey. This invitation was to find new roots that will bring ease, joy, grace and abundance to one's life. With drums, dance, chanting, InterPlay, silence and using all the elements (earth, fire, water and air) all were taken on a magical journey. With care, following the teachings of his elders from Malawi and using some InterPlay forms, there were new insights and inspiring transformations.

Visit the Sacred Dance Guild web site

www.sacreddanceguild.org

Ottawa Chapter's Phoenix Rising Workshop

Ottawa (Canada) Chapter:

Inspired and 'desired' out of the Sacred Dance Guild Festival's golden jubilee this summer was a weekend workshop in early November with the theme "Phoenix Rising". Two of the incredibly gifted leaders from festival, Claire Elizabeth Barratt, Motion Sculpture, and Debbie Danbrook, Shakuhachi Zen Flute Player, facilitated a profound journey of discovery. The group that gathered together to share this transformative experience included many who had been to the festival and had been so inspired by the work of Claire and Debbie that they had requested this opportunity. As well, there were a significant number of people drawn to the workshop who had never been to a sacred dance event before. New seeds were sprouting for all of us!

The weekend began with a drum circle, a time in the "now" where movement began somewhere between wild abandon and quiet reflection. Saturday's movement of discovering the phoenix rising was aroused through energies patterned after the five sacred rhythms of flowing, staccato, chaos, lyrical, and stillness. Debbie fluidly and intuitively played these sacred rhythms entirely in sync with Claire's insightful and inspired moving meditations, leading and following us on an exploration of every sense we have, connecting mind, body, and soul.

"New hope in the debris of everyday 'life',

Like fresh green shoots sprouting from the charred ground of a forest fire,

Rising up and reclaiming.

There is a continuing cycle of death to the old and rising up to the new.

It is healthy, it is natural and it is DIVINE."

On Sunday following, there was an opportunity for those attending the Saturday workshop to participate at the Morning Service at Bells Corners United Church incorporating the last portion of Saturday's workshop on the movement practice of "Motion Sculpture" as developed by Claire. A movement piece was created that became the prelude for the Sunday Remembrance Day Service, an example of the meaningful and inspirational way that sacred dance can transform the experience of participants in a workshop to a sharing with others.

The dance lives on in the sacred, and the sacred lives on in the dance!

From SDG's Youth Director

By Jason R. Archuleta

I've been asked to come up with programs and approaches to dance that cater to the interests of young people. I admit that I'm not sure that I'm the best choice for energizing youth to join the guild. In my view, the guild should appeal to all genders, faiths, affiliations, socio-economic considerations, and age groups. If we do our job to include everyone, youth will naturally be part of that inclusion.

The first question I asked myself after speaking with several Board members was: What do young people want? What I've discovered is that they want direction, respect, responsibility, accountability, and the ability to express themselves. All of these are part of a larger want; to be engaged, to matter.

I teach/direct these people the same way I teach/direct anybody. I instruct them as clearly and patiently as I can and answer any questions they might have. I praise, encourage, correct, perfect and reprimand as needed. Although I have a clear vision for my direction and choreography, I allow input and collaboration when appropriate.

I have done some work with youth groups; directing and choreography for church and school groups. I'm working on a project with youth at a suburban church. I give them a theme such as belonging, friendship, charity. They discuss what these themes mean to them and how they are manifested in everyday life. They discuss how these themes could be acted out, danced, sung, spoken, or played on an instrument. Then they spend the rest of the time in improvisations. All I do is watch and offer suggestions to help shape the play and stay on topic. My hope is these improvisations will eventually yield a three to ten minute piece that can be presented during a church service. They're shy at first and have to be constantly reminded that there are no bad choices.

I believe that young people will take pride in building something from the ground up when they are given a say in the process. If they're participating in an already conceived vision they will gladly give of their time and talents if the theme is relevant to their lives.

I would love the guild to take this approach to everyone who joins, especially youth. I look forward to doing what I can in this effort.

RECIPROCAL AFFILIATIONS

The Sacred Dance Guild has collegial status with the following organizations: This is a reciprocal agreement whereby members of the Guild may attend activities of these organizations at the same fee their own members pay (proof of SDG membership is required). Members of these organizations may attend Guild activities in the same way.

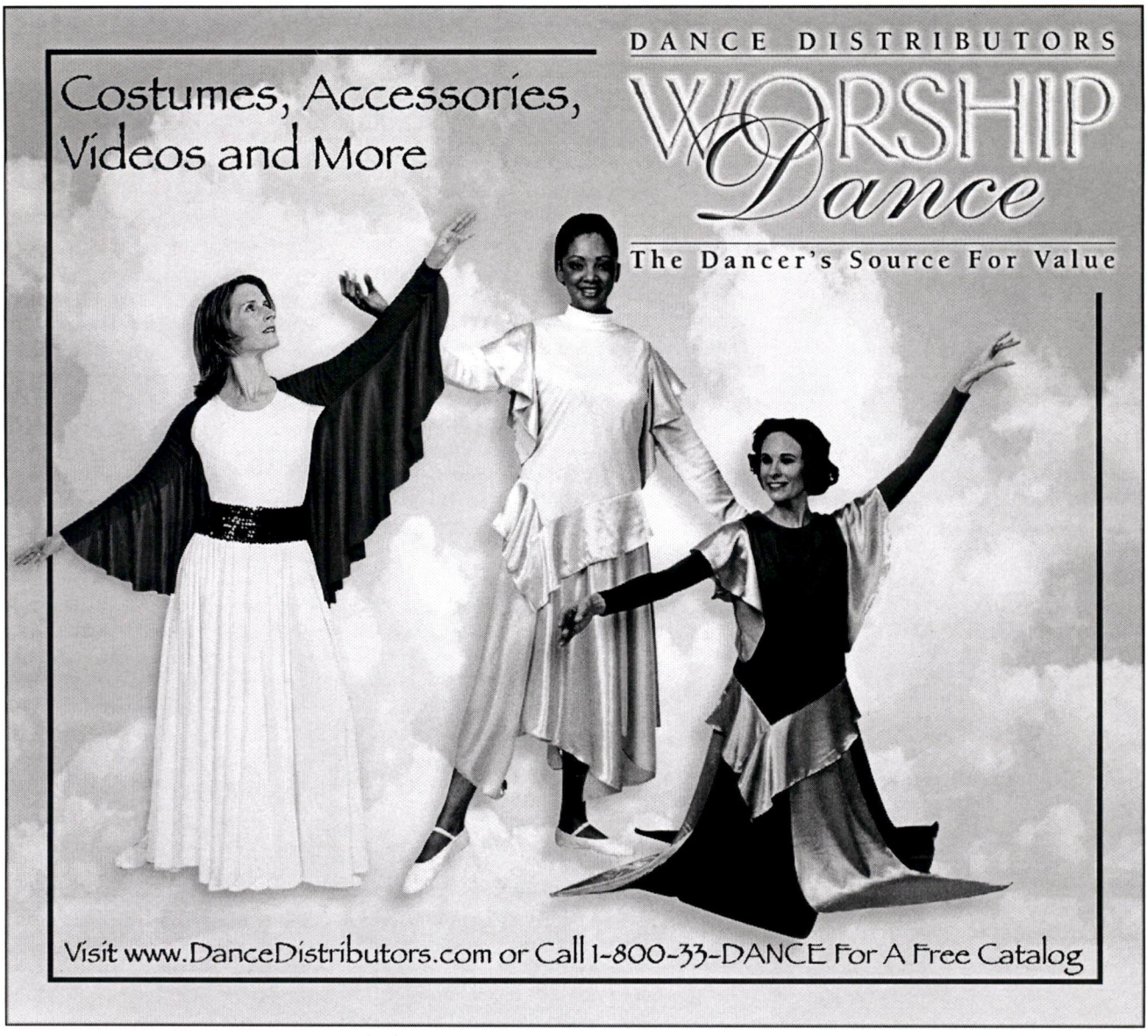
American Dance Guild, P. O. Box 2006, Lenox Hill Station, New York, NY 10021 (212) 932-2789.

International Association for Creative Dance (IACD), 103 Princeton Avenue, Providence, RI 02907, website www.dancecreative.org.

International Liturgical Dance Association (ILDA) of NPM (National Association of Pastoral Musicians), 3215 Bellacre Court, Cincinnati, OH 45248-5005 (513) 451-6746.

National Dance Association, American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 1900 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091 (703) 476-3436.

Korean-born Maryknoll Sister Yoo Soo Kim invites people to find inner healing and new life through sacred dance.
(from the March 2008 Maryknoll Magazine)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Resources - A Q and A

by Gail Conway, co-director Resources

Q – Can I use the website to find help for a particular problem facing me about sacred dance, choreography, costuming, etc.?

A – Coming soon on the website will be a Q and A devoted to individual problems or concerns.

I will answer your questions in a direct personal response via e-mail. The questions and responses will not be published on the website: however, some selected Q and As may be later used in the SDG Journal.

Example:

Q – My church has asked my group to dance to Silent Night in an evening service during Advent. Do you have any suggestions?

A – You are in luck. Our dance group has danced to Silent Night. An evening service is especially moving because the lights can be lowered and candles carried by the dancers. We have found that all white costumes reflect in the dark. A procession is a good way to begin as it fills the church with movement and light. The dancers can do simple movements as they progress down the aisle. Votives with real candles seem to create the best glow although battery candles can be used. After continuing the dance to additional verses, we leave the candles at the front to sustain the reverent mood.

I have danced to sacred music and text for about twenty years in churches, church camps, and open air venues. For the past eleven years, I have danced with the Fredericksburg Sacred Dance Ensemble. I have a B.A. in dance from the University of Mary Washington (formerly Mary Washington College) in Virginia. I am a member of the Episcopal Church and my background is Christian. For questions about other churches and other faiths, I have several people to help me. Sometimes my response may be, "I don't know."

So – fire away. I hope that I don't get stumped too often.

P. S. I don't give dating advice.

Minutes of the Annual Membership Meeting

July 22, 2008, New London, CT

The Annual Membership Meeting was held prior to the annual banquet, at the Port and Starboard Restaurant in New London, Connecticut.

President Mary Katherine Greenlaw called the meeting to order and introduced New London's Mayor, Kevin Cavanaugh. The Mayor welcomed Festival participants and read a proclamation declaring July 22, 2008 as Sacred Dance Guild Day in the city of New London, Connecticut.

A Motion to approve the minutes of the 2007 Membership Meeting in Berkeley, CA was made by Barrie Gibby and seconded by Kat Pettycrew. The motion carried unanimously.

President Greenlaw explained that the Treasurer's Report was not yet complete since the current report would reflect only Festival income and not expenses. She encouraged anyone who had questions to see a member of the Board or Treasurer Marcia Miller.

President Greenlaw addressed the assembly, honoring the "Living Legacies" present and acknowledging the Board of Directors. She thanked retiring Board members Connie Tyler, and her husband, Kenneth, who have managed the SDG web site since 2002, Indi Dieckgrafe and Andrea Shearer. Wendy Morrell and her Festival Team were warmly thanked for their efforts.

On behalf of the Guild, Kay Troxell presented an Honorary Membership to Rev. Dana Schlegel. Over 34 years, Rev. Schlegel's contributions to the Guild included being Secretary, Vice President and a member at large on the Executive Board. Rev. Schlegel expressed his thanks and shared his memories with us, calling the Festival a "Family reunion for all of us from across the country."

President Greenlaw next introduced Martha Myers, founder of the Connecticut College Dance Department and former Dean of the American Dance program. Toní Intravaia and Mary Jane Wolbers, who had been active since the first year of the Sacred Dance Guild in 1958, were introduced and warmly acknowledged.

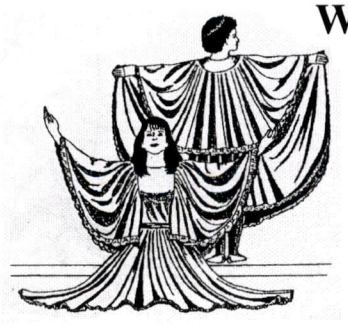
The results of the vote on the Executive Board were tabled until after the meeting. Subsequently, the proposed slate of officers was approved by a vote of 101 on line votes and 147 paper ballots. The new Officers for 2008-09 are:

President: Karen Josephson
President-Elect: Rev. Dr. JoyBeth Lufty
Vice President: P. Merle Wade
Secretary: Carolynn Hine-Johnson
Treasurer: Marcia Miller
New Directors are:
Chapters Director: Emmalyn Moreno
Development Co-Director: Barrie Gibby
Development Co-Director: Elaine Sisler
Education Director: Toni Intravaia
Festivals Co-director: Wendy Morrell
Festivals Co-director: Mary Kamp
Membership Director: Ellen Roberts Young
Public Relations Director: Linda Telesco
Resources Co-director: Kat Pettycrew
Resources Co-director: Gail Conway
Youth Director: Jason Archuleta

Barrie Gibby, Co-Director of Development, announced the establishment of a new "Legacy Fund," to provide seed money for future Festivals.

The meeting was adjourned for dinner at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, *Andrea Shearer*



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More ideas for working with seniors? Order book *Soul to Sole with Seniors* edited by Margaret Taylor Doane and Jeannine Bunyan. Order from Jeannine Bunyan Jump4JoyJB1@verizon.net.

And We Have Danced, Volumes I, II, and III. Sharing Company printed the first volume and Henry Printing printed the last two volumes. Volume I has the male dancers on the covers, front and back. Volume II has female dancers on the covers. And Volume III has Youth sacred dancers on the cover, as well as a sacred dance Group on the cover. All volumes are still available, but Volume III was most special in celebration of our 50th anniversary. This third volume would certainly be a great gift for not only members but those interested in sacred dance. (Cost $20.00 including postage and handling) Order from Toni' Intravaia, 201 Hewitt, Carbondale, Illinois 62901

A Practical Guide to Dancing in Worship by Deena Bess Sherman, M.A. Liturgical dance is the practice of sacred dance within the context of liturgical worship. It provides historical, theological background and practical advice from someone who has danced and worked with groups of dancers for many years.

Send your order with a check or money order ($12 per book and $3.00 shipping) to: Deena Sherman, PO Box 119, North Aurora, IL 60542. (If you would like your book signed, please specify the name. Otherwise it will simply be autographed.)

Journal of Dance Education, Volume 8, Number 2, 2008, J. Michael Ryan Publishing, Inc., 24 Crescent Drive North, Andover, NJ 07821. This issue features Dance and Spirituality with Guest Editor Karen Clemente. The articles include: Dance as Sacred Expression, The Spiritual Connection: Ruminations and Curiosities from a Dance Artist, Experiencing the Sacred in Dance Education: Wonder, Compassion, Wisdom, and Wholeness in the Classroom, Praise Dance in Community: An Interview with Reverend Dr. Albirda Rose-Eberhardt, and The Sacred or the Profane: The Challenge of Modern Dance in Religious Educational Settings.

(Editor's Note: See Review on page 1.)

Ottawa Chapter at Workshop (see page 11 for details).

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CALENDAR

January 29-February 1, 2009 - 3rd Annual Winter Retreat: with Alton Wasson, Daphne Lowell, Genesis Spiritual Life Center, Westfield, MA. Contact: Alton Wasson: altonwasson@comcast.net.

March 14, 2009 - Moving imagination, Intro to Contemplative Dance/ Authentic Movement. Contact: Alton Wasson: altonwasson@comcast.net.

April 8, 2009 - Blessing the sun that rises with healing in its rays: A Prophetic Voice in Jewish, Multireligious, and American Life. Contact: Rabbi Arthur Waskow or carlart@mindspring.com.

June 19-26, 2009 - International Association for Creative Dance Congress, at Hampshire College, Amherst, MA. Contact: www.dancecreative.org

June 28-July 6, 2009 - Sacred Dance Journey to Peru, Sponsored by The Sacred Dance Guild with Dr. JoyBeth Lufty, Tour Hostess; Andrea Mikana-Pinkham, Tour Director; Dr. Jose Altamirano, Tour Guide. Contact: JoyBeth Lufty, souldelite@aol.com.

June 28 - July 3, 2009 - Contemplative Dance/Authentic Movement 21st Annual - Week I (Basic), Genesis Spiritual Life Center, Westfield, MA. Contact: Alton Wasson: altonwasson@comcast.net or phone 413-268-3294.

July 12-16, 2009 - National Convention, Fellowship of United Methodists In Music and Worship Arts, Orlando, FL. Contact: www.FUMMWA.org.

July 26-31, 2009 - Contemplative Dance/Authentic Movement 17th Annual - Week II (Experienced), Genesis Spiritual Live Center, Westfield, MA. Contact: Alton Wasson: altonwasson @comcast.net.

Executive Board Meetings:
February 6-8, 2009, Burlington, N

Sacred Dance Guild Web Site:
www.sacreddanceguild.org

You can apply for membership to the Sacred Dance Guild in three ways: 1) Compl form and return with your membership dues. 2) Join online at our w www.sacreddanceguild.org. 3) Email to address below.

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